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ABSTRACT

Studies on both sides of the Atlantic reveal that the processes by which educational policy is made is highly political. In the 1960's education seemed particularly vulnerable to a realignment of forces because it has traditionally had some elements of localism and a degree of separateness as a governmental service based on the nature of its clientele, children, and the indirectness of its results. Two studies of the responses of political parties to realigning forces and the impact on intergovernmental relationships are summarized. The first is about the decentralization of New York City schools and the role of state government. The second is about the changing role of the English local authority and control of education. (Author/MLF)

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Comparative Intergovernmental Relations in Educational Policy-Making in American States and in England

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Introduction

About two decades ago in the United States and in England, it was considered bad form to mention education and politics in the same sentence. This was particularly true in the United States where the previous half century had been devoted to a crusade by educators to insure the continued separation of the two which had been achieved in the progressive era of the 1890's. In England, too, there was a quiesence. The bitter 19th century battles over who would control education, the state or the church, had resulted in a typical English compromise: the worst features of both approaches were retained while in the larger scene politics were permitted to recede and the basic structure for expanding educational provision was put in place. The outcome in both nations was a virtual separation of an expensive, people oriented governmental responsibility from the maelstrom of public debate on its values and party political competion over its allocations. There were flurrys of controversey, of course. In England, debate on the Education Act of 1944 finally settled the relationships of central and local government in providing for education by making the local education authority the administrator of national policy as set by central government. In the United States, Russia's technological achievement in launching the first man-made earth satelite in 1957 called into question the quality of American schools. The ensuing debate, while bringing about limited reforms in state provision and regulation, had the main effect of bringing the federal government to become a supplier of funds for schooling in the name of national defence. But in both countries the question of who controls and manipulates the process by which educational policies are made did not get raised because the myth that education is separate from politics was firmly in place.

The first scholarly questioning of the folklore was done by MacKinnon, a Canadian political scientist in his book, The Politics of Education (1960). He wanted to know why decisions effecting local school concerns appeared to be made at the provincial level and why local officials appeared to remain unmoved by citizens' requests. His conclusions pointed to a closed system of educational policy-making operated by a strongly entrenched bureaucracy influencing elected officials. Almost simultaniously, a spate of studies in the American states brought out the fact that interest groups composed of educators and their friends effectively monopolized access to government on education matters.[1] Although variations of geo-political divisions in the states as well as the relative power of governors and legislatures called for varied tactics, the strategy tended to be much the same: cooptation of the policy-makers and the insinuation of educators' goals as the goals of the state. Studies made in England at about the same time reflected a slightly different concern. There appeared to be a need for ascerting educational goals through national government policies and achieving some relaxation of the growing stranglehold of centralized decision-making.[2] The strategies of professional and lay interest groups were directed at gaining access to and being consulted by the controlling political party.

What emerged from these studies on both sides of the Atlantic was that the processes by which policy is made for education is highly political even though educators and their friends tend to avoid alliances with political parties. Secondly, those who seek policy change and modification from central or state government represent their interests as professionals and patrons of the schools, not necessarily the next lower level of government which delivers the services. Thirdly, what is sought does not adequately reflect the spectrum of local needs nor the variations in local capabilities for utilizing what might be forthcoming, but rather focus

on getting a fair share of state or national resources allotted to education. In sum, the politics preferred by pedagogues were those which made them the aggregators of public demand in the eyes of government, the arbitrators of what was needed in the way of resources and policy, and the reference point standing outside of political party in conformity with the myth of keeping politics out of the schools.

All the while these things were being discovered, segments of the public were beginning to demand changes in the responsiveness of the educational system at the local level. The realization that educational opportunity and quality were intimately bound up with life chances prompted demands for greater participation in the policy process by people who felt they had been excluded from exercising influence over policy and educational outcomes. Within the context of the coming apart of western social institutions in the 1960's, education seemed particularly vunerable to a realignment of forces because it has traditionally had some elements of localism and a degree of separateness as a governmental service based in the nature of its clientele, children, and the indirectness of its results. Until recently, politicians did not perceive education as an issue area which could contribute to their election or defeat, making it less critical for them than other areas of societal endeavor. Changing forces seeking change in education used these characteristics in promoting their demands.

If it seems important to examine the responses of political parties to realigning forces and the impact on intergovernmental relationships, the responses which seem most important are those at the first level of government which has responsibility for education and which is under party political control. In the United States, that level is almost invariably the state government as local boards of education are separate from general numicipal government and ostensibly non-party. In England, it is the local authority although partisanship in education has often

been blunted by the separateness of schools under their boards of governors. Two studies relevant to the problem have been summarized here. The first is about the decentralization of New York City schools and the role of state government. The second is about the changing role of the English local authority and control of education.

DECENTRALIZATION OF NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS

School redistricting policy is the responsibility of the state legislature, although the development and conduct of such policies has usually been given over to the state board of education regents. City school systems were created in 1917 by the legislature on the advice of the regents, to consolidate schools in each city under a single board of education. The objective was to achieve greater efficiency and economy. The reduction of political influence in school government was also an objective.

Discussion of decentralizing city schools by transferring limited authority from central boards to local school-community boards began in New York about 1964. The impetus came from community groups, particularly minorities, seeking a voice in determining educational goals, school programs, and how funds are spent. Questions of racial integration and separatism were part of the discussion. More important, questions about the political control of the schools and the regulation of expenditure, employment, and supervision were made part of the debate. New York City, the focus of discussion, is the only city school system in the state that has been decentralized.

Background to 1969

There were three main threads in the struggle over decentralization of New York City schools: the thrust of blacks toward community control, the determination of the United Federation of Teachers to hold on to its power to bargain with the Board of Education on a city-wide basis, and the apparent inability of city officials to find a solution to these problems while retaining over-all authority for school policy-making. As the three threads became more entangled state officials were called on to aid the several sides in settling the matter. Lack of progress by the City Board of Education and hardening of union and minority group positions after each of these attempts eventually resulted in a legislative denouement.

Between 1954 and 1961 black organizations and their white liberal allies in New York City had watched with increasing dismay the inept attempts of the Board of Education to reduce racial segregation in the schools. Steps in this direction, such as changes in attendance areas and freedom of transfer, seemed halting and confused. Most board efforts did not get beyond the planning stage and segregation increased with changing neighborhood patterns.

The UFT was drawn into the situation after it won the right to be the sole bargaining agent for the city's nearly 50,000 teachers following a 1961 strike. The union then sought greater job security and increased rights in the rules governing teacher supervision, promotion, and transfer concomitantly reducing the powers of principals and supervisors. The changes would also reduce the flexibility of the board in devising arrangements for decentralization and bring the UFT into direct conflict with community groups as decentralization became more of an issue.

State education officials began to play a continuing role in 1963. The City Board of Education had relied on voluntary open enrollment since 1961 to curb segregation. Civil rights leaders became convinced that this would fail and called on

the board to present a timetable for integration. The board then turned to State Education Commissioner James Allen to make a study of the schools and develop specific plans for desegregation. Allen's response was to form an advisory committee which reported in 1964. Its key recommendation for beginning desegregation was to replace junior high schools with integrated middle schools. The board made plans to implement this recommendation through the creation of 31 local districts but was unable to rally sufficient support and the plans were not carried out.

By 1965 protesting blacks were turning away from integration and toward community control as a means of obtaining school program improvements. If the pattern of segregation could not be broken then blacks would seek teachers and curricula appropriate for all-black schools. The board turned in this direction in 1967, but quite by accident.

Mayor John Lindsay asked the state for more money for city schools based on the fact that each of New York City's five boroughs are legally defined as counties. The legislature's response, pressed by upstate Republicans, was that to qualify for the aid requested each county, or borough, would have to become a separate school district. Lindsay appointed a panel headed by Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy to prepare proposals for decentralization. Meanwhile, the board established three experimental districts for decentralization and local board operation. They were the I.S. 201 complex, Two Bridges, and Ocean Hill-Brownsville districts.

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville experiment led to the final drawing of the battle lines. The local district's teachers, with UFT support, participated in the community planning group for the district. The plan was made and executed more quickly than the teachers expected and they were not consulted as they thought they would be. The Board of Education received the plan and, before it could react, a local governing board had been elected and proceeded to select school principals. The teachers refused to participate, but the City Board appointed four of the five men recommended by the local board.

Shortly thereafter the UFT struck the city system for higher wages and improved educational services. Although the strike was unrelated to the experimental district problem, the Ocean Hill governing board took it as an affront to their selection of principals and brought in parents to teach during the walkout. The local board also claimed the right to evaluate, transfer, and dismiss teachers as it saw fit. This was a direct attack on the rights of teachers gained by bargaining with the City Board, according to the UFT.

In the spring of 1968 the governing board in Ocean Hill dismissed 19 teachers. The City Board declared this illegal but failed to change the position taken by the Ocean Hill board. The union struck the entire system to protest both the local district's action and the City Board's failure to live up to its contract. Attempts at arbitration were unsuccessful and the state had to take over the administration of Ocean Hill-Brownsville.

This situation clearly demarked the positions of the union and the community groups. The union would henceforth examine decentralization almost strictly from the point of view of contract enforcement and city-wide personnel practices. The

community groups would press for greater autonomy in hiring and evaluating teachers in local districts. All of these factors would figure prominently in the legislative considerations to follow.

In this environment the Bundy panel finally completed a plan to solve the problem and it was submitted to the 1968 legislature. It called for 30 to 60 autonomous districts with local boards to establish curricula and to hire and assign personnel in accordance with state requirements. A central board would continue to operate the high schools but its main function would be long-range planning. The Bundy plan became the basis for several other plans, including Mayor Lindsay's, which would have retained greater power in the hands of the central board, and the regents' modifications, which would have established 15 districts, with the central board retaining authority over interdistrict teacher transfers but leaving intradistrict personnel matters in the hands of local boards.

All three plans were rejected by the 1968 legislature. The Bundy plan was rejected because it did not have the regents' endorsement. The regents' plan was rejected because it came too late in the session. The mayor's plan was rejected because, like the Bundy plan, it was opposed by the UFT. The Ocean Hill situation also played a part; legislators did not want to act until the union and the city settled their contractual differences. Acting earlier might have been viewed as legislative interference in a local labor dispute.

The pressure for community control in New York City, as evidenced in the Ocean Hill situation, was strong. Thus the 1968 legislature reached a compromise passing a bill sponsored by a Republican senator from one of New York City's boroughs. The bill directed the City Board of Education to prepare a plan for a community school system to be submitted to the regents and the legislature by December 1968, thus placing the entire problem in the hands of the legislature next session.

Scene-Setter

When the legislature met in January 1969 the major question was just how far it would go in using state powers to settle a local problem. The question was particularly sensitive, given the fact that any solution would have to be voted by a Republican majority drawn largely from upstate constituancies, whereas downstate New York City was represented largely by Democrats. In addition, there was little hope of finding a consensus among the New York City delegation as it contained reform, liberal, and regular Democrats, and some conservative Republicans. The controversy was exacerbated by divisions between black and white legislators; and strong pro-labor factions among the regular Democrats. Among upstate Republicans, on the other hand, there would be little support for any plan not endorsed by the regents, for these legislators traditionally looked to the educational government for solutions to redistricting problems.

At the outset the legislative leadership and the governor, Nelson Rockefeller, agreed that any solution must have the backing of the majority of New York City Democrats in the legislature. Rockefeller also let it be known, according to an education department official, that he would support the regents in their efforts

to solve the problem. If it had to be solved at the state level he wanted it solved with the endorsement of the state's educational government above partisan politics insofar as possible. The regents wanted a solution but would give sufficient power to each of the competing forces in the city. This the governor believed, would lessen the appearance of a politically imposed solution. While the legislative battle would be centered on a series of proposals, the critical question was how much political wrangling the governor and the legislative leaders could tolerate before a solution was achieved.

The 1969 Session

Two plans were placed before the 1969 legislature. The plan of the City Board, based on the Bundy Report, provided for community boards elected in 30 districts with the power to hire and transfer teachers within the districts. The boards could also determine curricula within state regulations and administer funds after the City Boards approved their budgets.

The Regents' proposal was a modification of this plan and called for a range of 20 to 30 districts, grievance procedures for teacher transfer problems, and authorization for districts to establish their budgets within a lump sum allocation from the City Board. The board was to be replaced by a five-member salaried central authority.

The City Board bill was quickly dropped because it did not have regents's endorsement. It was also unacceptable to the UFT because it included extensive community control. This effectively took the City Board out of the situation and left it to the legislature to offer counterproposals to the regents' measure.

The first compromise was a bill that would reduce the emphasis on community control by restricting local district autonomy in personnel and finance matters. It was designed to appeal to the UFT and, as it moved toward the Regents' plan, to upstate legislators. As might be expected, however, the bill did not appeal either to black interest groups or to liberal Democrats. The UFT refused to support the bill because it felt that it still gave local districts too much, too soon. This ended any possible support by the regular Democrats, who feared such support would offend labor.

Assembly Minority Leader Stanley Steingut, an influential New York City Democrat, then lent his support to an effort to solve the racial and union problems first and make the decentralization plan second. The proposal was developed, issue by issue, to steer a course between militants and conservatives on community control. Several black Democrats participated in these discussions. Safeguards for the UFT were developed in consultation with the union president. According to The New York Times, these discussions were secret to avoid any accusations that either the black community or the union was "selling out" to the other on community control. Premature disclosure of these negotiations by a legislator in a television interview led to their breakdown because the union leader felt it necessary to withdraw.

Steingut persisted. He knew that all factions of the New York City Democratic party had to be involved in a solution. He retrieved the situation by bringing in the deputy minority leader, a leader of the reform Democrats. This salvaged the

situation and a successful compromise offering reduced community control and gaining at least tacit union support seemed immenent.

Liberal democrats and several black legislators, however, opposed this compromise and sought support for the regents' bill. Regent Kenneth Clark, a black, also opposed the compromise and obtained the private agreement of the regents to repudiate it. When it came to a vote the several black legislators came out against the Steingut bill. Word of the regents' repudiation turned upstate Republicans against it and the UFT disavowal curtailed Democratic support. The bill was defeated.

After this compromise failed the decentralization effort collapsed and the actors dissolved again into separate camps. The union leader endorsed an earlier compromise bill knowing full well it could not gain sufficient support, essentially saying that the union would prefer no bill at all in 1969. On the other hand, black legislators could not back out and still face their constituents, nor could the liberal and reform Democrats.

Governor Rockefeller was faced with a critical decision. Should he let the issue slip back out of the legislature and add further chaos to the New York City situation or should he use Republican votes and get a bill? A conference of about 12 black and Puerto Rican legislators convinced the Republican leadership that no bill meant chaos. These legislators proposed themselves as the nucleus of a compromise. This convinced the governor of the need for a bill for the sake not only of the city but of his own political stature, according to an education department official. Calling in the Republican leadership, he told them that all deals were off. In doing so he committed Republican votes to solving the issue, but a strategy still had to be devised.

The regents' bill was used as a starting point. This would add upstate Republican strength to the black and Puerto Rican bloc. In addition, the elements of community control in the regents' bill would bring in some liberal Democrats. There would be a loss of other liberal and reform Democrats who wanted greater community control, however, thus jeopardizing the governor's prospects of pleasing a substantial portion of the New York City delegation. The bill also precluded support from the union, which wanted less community control.

The leadership worked out the compromises in close cooperation with the regents, the blacks, and the Puerto Ricans. Upstate Republicans were asked for their views. Steingut was consulted and portions of his measure were incorporated in the drafting of the bill, particularly those items that preserved the union's bargaining position with the New York City Board. The governor and his staff then held separate conferences with the blacks and their supporters. The final bill was drafted by a counsel to the senate majority leader.

Before the bill went to the floor 10 Republican assemblymen from New York City voiced opposition to it. They were conservative Republicans who wanted an elected central school board with most of the board's current powers retained. Another round of conferences was held by the governor and the legislative leaders, first with black and Puerto Rican legislators, then with New York City Republicans. The

task was to avoid using upstate Republican votes to impose a solution on City Republicans, an undesirable move in a closely divided lower house. After several concessions were made the governor stopped all talks and the bill was sent to the floor. He let it be known among Republican lawmakers that this was the bill to be passed. He also threatened to call a special legislative session on decentralization if it were not approved, a move that would focus attention on the legislature's attempts at solution rather than on the governor's role. On the floor the bill received passionate support from black assemblymen, the senate majority leader, and some City Democrats. The bill passes the Senate by a vote of 43-to-9 and the assembly by 125-to-23.

LOCAL POLITICS IN ENGLISH EDUCATION

A series of changes taking place on the national scene are putting the decision processes of local education authorities in a new light. These changes are culminations of several long run movements in the national outlook for education, some redefinition of intergovernmental relationships and a rise in the importance of local government. All of these changes are giving a new twist to the role of politics in education. First, the central government has apparently lowered the priority of education in its ranking of social concerns. The political parties are less in harmony about what to do in education than they were in the sixties. Second, the Department of Education and Science (DES) seems to be moving toward acceptance of greater variance in local authority needs and capabilities. With this has come a continuation of the trend toward cooperation between the two. But it has also increased opportunity for political manoeuvreing at the local level. Third, local government as a government and as a political entity has become more important following the reorganizations of 1965 and 1974. While the redistribution of responsibility to the new authorities was not great, the tendency was to place broad policy-making and administrative powers at the level most likely to come under party political control Political parties being what they are, vying for control of the councils in the new authorities intensified.

Background

In local authorities themselves, education had supposedly been a politically neutral area. Community pressure, while not unheard of, was not an expected nor fully acceptable means of influencing change. Within government and within the education service there was usually tacit agreement to work out differences inside rather than resort to open argument or make power plays through alliances with other groups. The impact of the controversies which surrounded the reorganisation of secondary education in the 1960's broke in on these conventional patterns. Council members became torn between community desires, as argued by various associations, and party policy as councillors understood it. Where party influence was weak, other influences often won. Even where party was strong, some councillors felt party intrusion into education was wrong and deserted the party on critical issues. Education officers tried to keep various factions working together but teachers sometimes took sides with parent groups and others who believed in comprehensives or with those who thought that the end of the eleven-plus exams would erode standards. Organizations at the local level received encouragement and help from national interest groups. Whether pro or con, the message was that the council had to hear their views and that lobbying in education was no longer a dirty word.

This has left a legacy of changed attitudes about decision-making for education in local government. There is a conviction that determined action can move local officials and that those officials can manoeuvre within central government mandates if pressed to do so. This does not mean that pressures have constantly increased. They have not but the reticence to influence LEA decisions by lobbying is gone. Political parties have recognized that what was believed to be a politically neutral area was really a fertile field for various interests to promote their views and create havoc. The reaction has been to delineate party philosophy and policy within the local party organization. Party lines have hardened in imitation of, but not in subordination to, the national parties, often with aid from national headquarters. With increased focus on local struggles, parties will not be pre-empted again by leaving the field to others.

Results in Six Authorities

The policy process for education in local authorities takes place in an increasingly closed system characterized by an emphasis on domination and control through party political organizing and directing. While there were variations in the degree of party domination and control in each of the six authorities studied, all showed evidence of having restricted and redefined the arena in which educational policy-making takes place. The autonomy of the LEA as a government to devise its own internal processes has been used to limit access to the process by those outside of government and to regulate the interactions of those within government. The controlling party overrides the council committee system as the instrumentality for policy-making with the purpose of preventing a coalescence of forces which might generate other aims and alternative solutions to problems. Those forces would appear to include segments of the public, school governors and coopts on the education committee and teachers as well as education officers and the minority party.

There are three aspects to this political enclosure of the process: seizing the extended structure for the governance of education, defining and using consultation in a manner which limits access and making party the vehicle for change through setting a pattern of control which confines initiation and response to those within government at critical stages. All three aspects turn on the relative ease with which a cohesive, disciplined majority can organize and dominate the structure of local government.

Those elements of the extended structure designed to provide for contribution and participation by persons outside of government, coopted places and boards of governors, have been firmly tied in through the power of appointment and political choosing of those who serve. Teachers' organizations and interest groups have also been brought into the orbit of control through a combination of joint consultative bodies and cooptation, using or resting in part on ideological alignments with political parties. The degree of control differs depending on the political division of the council and the majority's willingness to exert control but the basis is in the organizing, reaching out to make coopt and governing board seats into party places. Where control cannot be exercised directly as with teachers' panels of consultative committees the rules for interaction, made by those in government, effectively mitigate those constraining forces by channelizing participation. This domination of the extended structure was evident in all six authorities, being virtually complete in the outer London Boroughs and well underway in the counties.

Consultation as a means of promoting broad based decision-taking, both in and outside of government, has become subject to conditions which have the effect of limiting access to the policy process. The conditions stem from and resolve around assessments of power and influence by parties rather than evolving from expressions of interest and the need to know on the part of consultants. The results produce restrictions on who may be consulted and when. These restrictions, evident in all six authorities, tend to distort the meaning of consultation by *à priori* selection of those to be consulted and by delaying consultation until the political metes and bounds of decisions have been well established. The distortion becomes progressively greater moving from inside of government toward the community. This fulfills a political purpose in that it makes consultation amenable to control and the results more predictable.

The third aspect, setting a pattern of control, provides for a reasonable division of labour under the hard shell of organizing. Politicians control the process while professionals in government contribute ideas and oversee their development. Party becomes a vehicle by which change can be brought about. Officers provide information and professional judgements. However, there is an exchange of role aspects which comes into operation. The exchange works because it benefits both by making the system predictable. The normal conception of the policy process is one of narrowing choices about objectives, alternatives and ways of doing. Party political doctrines and resource constraints place wide parameters around choices at the outset. This places emphasis on the early stages of the policy process and is a factor which gives focus to the professional response.

The process throughout is characterized by a series of initiation and response situations among those within government which transends the strictures of the normative notion that elected members make policy while officers execute it. The blurring of this distinction gives chief education officers the necessary freedom to carry out a political dimension of their role in matching professional views and party political desires. Members accept the exchange or role aspects as essential to the process but expect a reversion to more usual roles in discussion and debate and certainly before the legitimization stage begins. Chief education officers for their part seem to be most punctual about reverting to the professional demension of their role although committee chairmen have access to their political observations.

Changed Attitudes Toward Central Control

Given an education system which is labelled a national system locally administered, central government control as a constraint on local policy-making is an inevitable concern. But how much of a constraint, in what particular respects, seems to be answerable only by those who make policy and operate the system in the local authority. When councillors were asked if education is too much controlled from the centre by the DES nearly all felt that it was not. The most pervasive point of view was that local authorities have sufficient autonomy to do what needs to be done in the way they feel it should be done. In implementing national policies, local actions, council policies alter the character of central policies to suit community needs and conditions. The greatest rub was money, either not enough was being provided by central government or there were too many tasks required of local government without consideration of its financing problems. While no councillor wanted total central financing, many felt that either supplemental money should accompany mandates or the LEA should be permitted reasonable exceptions to national policy on the basis of ability to finance. These responses imply that central government directives and financial stipulations present the LEA with difficulties in arranging its priorities for policy-making.

The difficulties were borne out by those few councillors who felt that there is too much central control. Money was more so the root of their complaints in that local funds had to be used along with rate support funds to comply with mandates from central government. Reorganization of secondary education was the prime example cited by these mostly Conservative and Independent members. Other educational problems had to be laid aside, pushed down in priority, in order to begin going comprehensive. LEA's are now getting support money for nursery education which they would prefer to have to complete reorganization.

Some councillors thought the balance between central control and local freedom was just about right: centrally set standards force recalcitrant authorities to provide things they wouldn't otherwise. Others saw the need to have national policies for the distribution of resources, including teachers, and some reasonable assurance that there is adequate provision in all parts of the country. They were willing to accept the risk of blind enforcement and pressures toward uniformity. Consultation was seen as a preventive for this problem and most felt that the opportunity already exists to achieve reasonable compromises between the DES and local authorities.

Officers were less divided on the question of central control because they view it from the perspective of both the authority and their professional role. Thus, while central financing practices complicate the officer's tasks, the knowledge that he can get bureaucratic backing for his professional stands is adequate compensation. It should be obvious, however, that officers do not use this backing as a stick in the corner. To do so would interfere in the professionals' primary objective of getting the authority to use its own freedom and autonomy.

To further test the question of central control, councillors and officers were asked what they would do about a mandate from central government to take some particular policy action. The most general answer from members was that they would obey the law. Beyond that nearly all councillors detailed political and other considerations to be made before complying. Nearly all of the chief education officers said they would interpret the mandate and supply the education committee with its meaning as it may apply to the local system. Beyond that they agreed with members that the first decision was a political one to be made by the majority party. To sort out what will be done, what tack will be taken, the majority group asks itself two questions: what stance will give the authority the best break by maximizing our benefits while retaining our freedom and what leverage do we have for making our stance effective? Leverage for making an effective stance may mean squeezing the DES for a necessary permission or aid in finding additional monies if there is rapid compliance. It also means finding the needed rationales to stave off DES pressure if going slow is the chosen alternative.

Another question is implied by the fact of the response being a political decision and that has to do with the match between local party philosophy and government policy. The lack of a match may result in seeking a go slow option. It seems to be of some importance who controls the government of the day and who is in majority locally. Conservative leaders believe they have a better chance to present their case and receive dispensations if the Conservatives are the government. Labour leaders agree, noting that a Labour government expects Labour councils to be first off the mark. But for both parties the decision to waffle has to take into account the make-up of the council. It becomes a calculated risk if either party has only a thin majority.

The constraints imposed by central government control seem to be more focused on what they will mean within the authority than with what central government might do to the authority. The majority parties seem much more concerned with LEA freedom than with the DES. The law will be upheld ultimately but it may be a long way around before the controlling party puts the pieces together the way it feels they should be in light of local conditions. Officers feel they have a different problem in

that they have to balance professional and community loyalties while serving their political masters. They are constrained in that they cannot ignore political cues but must, at the same time, retain a professional stance. They use the DES regulations when necessary to prod the council but with some recognition of the limitations on such use imposed by the desirability of bringing the council majority to act out of enlightened community and self-interest.

Conclusion

Increased party domination benefits the controlling party in its governing of the LEA. The system for making decisions about education at the local level affords built-in protection from volitile community pressures and other forces. This provides the opportunity for consistent progress toward objectives in education through consistency of policies without disruptions brought on by unclarity and uncertainty of purpose. The system is predictable so that the results of the process can be expected to provide solutions to problems that have been defined. Responsibility for the well-being of the service rests with elected officials, not with professional officers who do not have to face the electors. It is the majority party which is identified with the results. At the same time, officers have an unmistakable focus for their technical and professional knowledge.

There are also benefits to the local authority in its relationship to central government, particularly the Department of Education and Science. The unpredictability of LEA policy processes was identified as a source of mistrust between the two. The freedom of the LEA to devise its own internal processes was considered a root cause of the problem. Under party control the policy process becomes predictable and while the specific results may not meet DES expectations, they can demonstrate a consistency of political purpose. A concomitant result may be a qualitative improvement in the ability of the local authority to explicate its difficulties in meeting DES requirements. The identification and definition of educational problems and objectives is made early in the process. They are subject to scrutiny for their impact on authority resources and effects on the educational system as the political implications are sorted out. Both of these factors, consistancy of political purpose and the ability of the LEA to clearly state its difficulties with mandates, have been demonstrated to be important in bargaining with the DES. Where new departures are being tried or changing demands on the educational system of the nation provide some uncertainty about how things should be done, the LEA under party control may retain more degrees of freedom in meeting DES requirements than an authority which is not.

Analysis

The new realignment of forces seeking change in education sought new avenues of access to the policy process. In the New York case, the inability of local officials to suggest and bring acceptable solutions on line without state intervention prompted those seeking change to move toward gaining direct state action. The strategy which evolved was to get politicians, if not parties, to respond to their demands. Even though their elected representatives were a faction of the minority party, the insistance of interest groups in the City that they produce an acceptable legislative solution was sufficient pressure to prevent the imposition of a policy designed by the state's education board. Once the governor was convinced of the need for action, he put his party's majority behind the policy demanded from the interest groups.

In England, the forces seeking access were attempting to obtain policy modifications at the local level that could not be obtained from central government. However, changing conditions provided political parties the opportunity to seize the initiative and exert hardening political control over the policy processes of the local authority. Education was one concern among several for controlling parties but the ability of the majority to organize the council and extend their domination into the structure for education gave them effective control of access. The interest groups were shut out.

Political parties became more important in the process at the first governmental level under party political control. In New York, political party was substituted for the traditional alliances of schoolmen and their friends which usually acted in concert with the state education board. Party became a vehicle for change in competition with the education coalition. State politicans were chosen by new forces at the local level to represent their concerns because those seeking change realized that the problem was political.

In England, it was the parties which realized the political nature of educational policy-making and moved to control the field at the local level. Interest groups were dependent on the lack of hard party organizing in local authorities to provide opportunities for influencing policy outcomes at the operating end of the system. They could not compete for control and open alliances with political parties would be self-defeating. The result has been that interest groups now face the same problem at the local level that they faced with central government -- how to gain access to the policy process.

Intergovernmental relationships have changed because of the realignment of forces. The New York case was well within the American trend toward seeking solutions from state government when local educational government cannot or will not respond. It also reflected the strong element of localism in American education. However, the reticence to move educational policy-making into the wider arena of party politics at the state level has disappeared. The closed system of politics preferred by educators and their friends was by-passed. Politicians and parties were made to act more directly on demands from new forces at the local level.

The English situation is different. The very fact of political party strengthening at the local level has provided the education authority with greater ability to modify central government policies at the operating end of the system. Again the element of localism in education surfaced but within parties. Central government decision-making about education may be brought to give greater consideration of local needs and abilities.

Comparisons

Political party involvement in the policy process for education has increased in both countries because of the wider range of social concerns which now revolve about schools and schooling. However, the way in which that involvement has come

about seems to have been more dependent on the way parties perceive themselves rather than how they are perceived.

Parties seem interpose themselves in educational policy-making in light of their own self-interest. It is perhaps most difficult for parties to see where they might serve their interests when the problems are intergovernmental, when there is a strong established lobby involved and when there is a considerable tenderness to policy area as there is in education. But self-interest was obvious in both countries, not in the sense that parties could gain greater power by acting but rather that they could lose by doing nothing. The reticence of parties to act in education may have been reduced by the fact that scholars had exposed the myth about separating education and politics.

It is not clear how salient parties will be in the translation of a broader spectrum of demands into educational policies. There are paradoxes which obscure the view. In American states, legislative parties are the strongest, most disciplined of American parties. Historically, they have tended to operate as a meeting ground for resolving the conflicting demands of localities. Yet, while this role seems most suitable for the intergovernmental situation of education, the direct thrust of parties into this policy area has only begun. In England, local party organizations of the national parties have been weak, particularly at the county level. Yet, they propelled themselves into control in virtually all local authorities when local government was reorganized. The impetus did not seem to come totally from the national headquarters of the parties. In both countries, there is little to indicate that traditional educational coalitions have disappeared or are not hard at work plying their trade. They may be less united than before but they are still competative in the policy process. Nor has there been a firm, continuing division of spheres wherein one set of interests acts on one level of

government and another set of forces seeks to influence the next level of government. Such a division has been observed from issue to issue but its institutionalization has not come about.

The real question is whether or not parties, in pursuing their self-interest, determine that strands on education can be translated into support at the polls. Militant teachers' organizations are already pressing them in that direction in terms of teacher welfare. Other interests, traditional allies of the educators and new forces at the community level have not achieved that degree of power. Until they do, parties will continue to be reactive to selective pressures rather than develop comprehensive platforms for educational policies.

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